



Department of Justice

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HATE CRIME CHARGED FOR ASSAULT IN CHICO

SACRAMENTO, Calif.—Acting United States Attorney Lawrence G. Brown and Acting Attorney General of the Civil Rights Division Loretta King announced today that a federal grand jury returned a one-count indictment charging ERIC LOREN CLAWSON, 26, San Francisco, formerly of Chico, Calif., and JOE GRIVETTE, 27, of Paradise, Calif., with a federal civil rights violation in connection with a 2008 assault on an African-American in a bar in Chico.

This case is the product of a joint investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Butte County District Attorney's Office, and the Chico Police Department.

According to Assistant United States Attorneys Benjamin B. Wagner and Russell L. Carlberg, who are prosecuting the case together with Civil Rights Division Trial Attorney Edward Chung, the indictment alleges that CLAWSON, a former professional mixed martial arts fighter, aided and abetted by GRIVETTE, committed an unprovoked, bias-related assault on an African-American patron of a Chico bar on the night of Sunday, July 6, 2008. The victim suffered injuries as a result of the attack.

This is the second racially motivated assault prosecuted by the Department of Justice in Sacramento in the past week. Last week, JOSEPH SILVA, 55, and GEORGIA SILVA, 51, both of Fairfield, formerly also of South Lake Tahoe, were indicted in an unrelated racially motivated attack in South Lake Tahoe in 2007.

"The Department of Justice and local law enforcement take hate crimes very seriously. We will continue working together with state and local authorities to bring to justice those who intimidate and assault people because of race or national origin," said Acting United States Attorney Lawrence G. Brown.

If convicted of the charges, the defendants face a maximum of 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. The actual sentence, however, will be determined at the discretion of the court after consideration of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables and any applicable statutory sentencing factors.

The charges are only allegations and the defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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